

Reading comprehension

Infer meaning, discuss word choices and summarise evidence.

Name: _____ Date: _____

The harbour bell

The harbour bell had not rung for years. It hung above the old lifeboat shed, green at the edges where salt had settled. When Ellis volunteered to help tidy the shed, he expected boxes of rope, not a letter hidden behind a loose board.

The letter described a winter rescue. A fishing boat's engine had stopped working beyond the harbour wall. Before radios were common, a watcher rang the bell to call the crew. The writer thanked the volunteers but left no name. Ellis read the final line twice: "You never asked who we were before you came."

At the village meeting, Ellis suggested polishing the bell and displaying the letter. Some people wanted the bell rung every hour as a new attraction. Ellis shook his head. "We can tell its story without turning it into background noise," he said. The meeting agreed to ring it once at the opening of the display. On that morning, the single note travelled over the water, and the crowd fell quiet.

1. Where does the bell hang?

2. What happened to the fishing boat?

3. Why was the bell useful before radios were common?

4. What does the final line of the letter suggest about the rescuers?

5. Why does Ellis read the final line twice? Give a supported inference.

6. What does background noise suggest about ringing the bell every hour?

7. How does the crowd respond to the single note?

8. Summarise the disagreement and the decision in two sentences.

Answers: Reading comprehension

Try the questions first. Use these notes to check your thinking.

1. Above the old lifeboat shed.

The opening paragraph gives its location.

2. Its engine stopped working beyond the harbour wall.

The letter describes the rescue.

3. It called the volunteer crew to a rescue.

The watcher rang it to summon the crew.

4. They helped without judging who needed help.

They did not ask who the people were before coming.

5. It makes an impression on him because it shows the volunteers helped anyone.

Accept a plausible inference linked to the line; his exact thoughts are not stated.

6. People might stop noticing its meaning.

Frequent noise can become something people ignore.

7. They fall quiet.

The final sentence states their response.

8. Some people want the bell rung hourly, but Ellis wants its story respected. They agree to ring it once when the display opens.

Include the two views and the final decision.

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